



OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

PO BOX 202501
HELENA MT 59620-2501
www.opi.state.mt.us
(406) 444-3680
888-231-9393
(406) 444-0169 (TTY)

Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information Contact:
Joe Lamson 444-3160
Donna O'Neill 444-0793

Montana Students Rank High in Reading and Math

Superintendent of Public Instruction Linda McCulloch today released the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading and Mathematics Test scores showing Montana students ranked among the nation's top students.

"Montana's students remain among the top students participating in 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for reading and mathematics," said Superintendent Linda McCulloch. "Only 8th grade students in five other states scored higher than Montana students in reading and math."

Montana's 8th grade students ranked 6th nationally in NAEP reading and math scores. Montana's 4th grade students ranked 10th in reading and 17th in math.

Massachusetts ranked nationally number one in all 2005 NAEP tests for all grades. Montana trailed Massachusetts by only 5 points for 8th grade reading average scale scores and by 6 points in 8th grade math. Montana 4th grade students were behind Massachusetts by only 6 points in both reading and math.

"Montana students' reading and math scores remained statistically near the same levels as when the reading tests were taken in 2002 and the math tests in 2000. The one exception to this trend is in 4th grade math," noted Superintendent McCulloch. "Since 2000, all Montana 4th grade students have improved their math scores by an average of 13 points. American Indian students and students receiving free and reduced lunches improved their scores by 15 points."

Montana 4th grade student math scores improved 13 points since 2000, while their reading scores improved one point from 2002. Montana 8th grade math scores improved one point since 2000, and their reading scores were down one point from 2002.

Montana scores were close to the national trends for this same period. Nationally, 4th grade student math scores also improved 13 points since 2000, while 4th grade reading scores remained the same as in 2002. Nationally, 8th grade math scores improved 6 points since 2000 while their reading scores were down three points from 2002.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly called the "Nation's Report Card", is the only federally mandated survey of student achievement in various subject areas.

"It is our mission to advocate, communicate, educate and be accountable to those we serve."

Authorized by Congress and administered by the National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP regularly reports to the public on the educational progress of American students.

All 50 states are now required by the "No Child Left Behind Act " to participate in the NAEP Reading and Math Tests. In Montana, a random sample of 5342 4th grade students and 5293 8th grade students took the 2005 NAEP tests.

"These results speak well for the quality of education provided by Montana's educators. It underscores the importance of current work by the Legislature to provide for a 'system of free quality' public schools. While we have done well, we can do better. For all Montana kids to succeed, we need to adequately fund our schools to keep a high quality teacher in every classroom," concludes Superintendent McCulloch.

NAEP 2005 Assessments

Grade 4 Reading

Average Scale Scores		
Year	Nation	Montana
2005	217	225
2003	216	223
2002	217	224
1998	213	225
1994	212	222

Grade 8 Reading

Average Scale Scores		
Year	Nation	Montana
2005	260	269
2003	261	270
2002	263	270
1998	261	271

Grade 4 Math

Average Scale Scores		
Year	National	Montana
2005	237	241
2003	234	236
2000	224	228

Grade 8 Math

Average Scale Scores		
Year	Nation	Montana
2005	278	286
2003	276	286
2000	272	285
1990	262	280